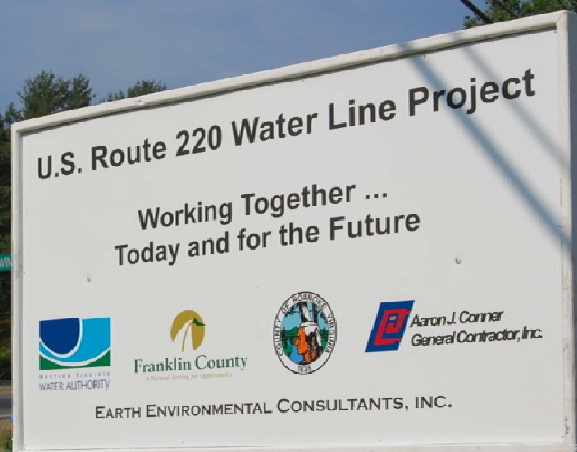




2008 ANNUAL REPORT

*Protecting Our Past,
Enriching Our Present,
Securing Our Future*



Chairman's Message /	2
Administrator's Message	
Board of Supervisors	3
Protecting Citizens	4
Creating Jobs and Tax Base	7
Promoting Education	8
Expanding Recreation	10
Supporting Families	13
Providing Efficient Government	14
Building Infrastructure	16
Planning for the Future	17

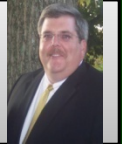
Chairman's Message "The Year Ahead"



As I look ahead to the next year, I am encouraged by the opportunities lying before us and driven by the challenges we face. With an uncertain national economy, one of our most important responsibilities will be protecting and expanding our local economy and business base. The Board of Supervisors is committed to the dual goals of creating more jobs and increasing the household incomes of Franklin County families. We will continue to strive every day to reach those goals. While the County focuses on economic development, we are also committed to responsible stewardship of our natural resources and the protection of the interests of local citizens and their tax dollars. We will continue to invest in education, both through the public school system and through post-secondary training, to ensure you and your family have the best preparation for future success. We will continue to be vigilant in protecting our natural beauty and our precious natural resources, as these are expenditures that will return incalculable benefits to our community for generations to come.

The challenges we will face in the coming year will not be simple and the opportunities we pursue will not be easy. However, the people of Franklin County are strong and your County government is determined. We will continue to work in the interest of the common good in the open, honest manner that has distinguished this community for so long. Your Board of Supervisors welcomes your input and your ideas. We hope you will attend Board meetings and frequent the County's local government website at www.franklincountyva.org to stay up to date with projects and issues facing us as a community.

Administrator's Message "The Year in Review"



The past year has been one of tests and triumphs in Franklin County. As I look back, I am extremely pleased that your local government has successfully lived up to its promise of honest, open, and efficient government for all of our citizens. County employees strive every day to serve you to the best of their abilities and to treat everyone in a fair and professional manner. We are certainly gratified to continue to win regional and state awards for the things that we do, but it is the accomplishments that make tangible positive impacts on the citizens of Franklin County that we truly celebrate. Achievements such as reducing response times for our emergency services operations, our school system continuing to rank among Virginia's best, and our ability to maintain our AA bond rating are all items that make real improvements in the lives of citizens. These accomplishments let you know that your tax dollars are being spent wisely and for the greatest benefit to all.

We continue to focus on building much needed infrastructure and improving our already enviable quality of life. Numerous projects have been undertaken to improve our community, such as the construction of a new 12-inch water line that will serve homes and businesses along the growing Route 220 Corridor and the continuing work on the new regional jail facility that will save the County a significant amount in prisoner transport costs and allow law enforcement personnel to spend their time protecting citizens rather than driving inmates to jails throughout the region. We have proudly opened two new recreational facilities, the Smith Mountain Lake Community Park Beach and the Rocky Mount Elementary Playground for All, which will provide new opportunities for the local and regional population, thus increasing our quality of life. These are but a few of the dozens of projects that the County has pursued over the past year that will each, in their own way, make life a little better for the residents of our wonderful community.

That is not to say that this past year has been without challenges. While the tax burden on Franklin County citizens is among the lowest in the Commonwealth, it has become a constant struggle to continue to provide the same levels of service with the massive budget cuts being forced upon us by the state. Few realize that forty-six percent (46%) of the County's budget is funded by the Commonwealth. As Virginia faces budget shortfalls and reduces the dollars sent to localities, we must make hard decisions on how to cut expenses without sacrificing services or how to raise the necessary revenues without adversely impacting our citizens who are already trying to cope with their own household budgets. It is a balancing act that the Board of Supervisors and the entire local government deals with on a daily basis. Our promise to you is that we will continue to squeeze every ounce of benefit possible from every tax dollar you send ensuring you continue to get the levels of service you expect and deserve.



Franklin County Board of Supervisors

Rocky Mount District

Charles Wagner,
Chairman

540.483.9109
charleswagner@franklincountyva.org
Term Expires 12-31-09



Blackwater District

W. Wayne Angell,
Vice-Chairman

540.483.7441
wayneangell@franklincountyva.org
Term Expires 12-31-11



Blue Ridge District

Bobby W. Thompson

540.365.2472
bobbythompson@franklincountyva.org
Term Expires 12-31-11



Boone District

David A. Hurt

540.721.7406
davidhurt@franklincountyva.org
Term Expires 12-31-09



Gills Creek District

Russell P. Johnson

540.721.5339
russjohnson@franklincountyva.org
Term Expires 12-31-11



Snow Creek District

W. Leland Mitchell

540.483.4488
lmitch@b2xonline.com
Term Expires 12-31-09



Union Hall District

David R. Cundiff

540.576.3210
davidcundiff@franklincountyva.org
Term Expires 12-31-11



Protecting Citizens

No responsibility is more sacred or taken more seriously than the duty of government to protect its citizens. The Board of Supervisors invests heavily in our law enforcement, fire, and rescue organizations and departments to ensure that those throughout the county are protected. The exceptional job done by our law enforcement and emergency services personnel during the Ferrum College incident proved once again that the investment of your tax dollars has been wisely made. The community owes a great debt of gratitude to these professionals and volunteers for putting themselves in harm's way to protect us. Having them standing at the ready provides us all with peace of mind for ourselves and our families.

Law Enforcement Responds to Ferrum College's Call

In February, national attention focused on Ferrum College as an armed suspect was spotted on grounds. By all accounts, the actions taken that day by college administration, the County Sheriff's Office, the County Public Safety Department, and many others were quick, decisive, and exceptional. After the tragedy at Virginia Tech one year before, local officials were prepared to deal with such a crisis. Immediately after the initial call was received at the County's 911 Center, local law enforcement and emergency response personnel, along with the State Police and other regional Sheriff's Offices, descended upon the scene. The entire campus was locked down and thoroughly searched. Law enforcement and College officials made the safety of the student body their top priority and watched over them throughout the ordeal. In addition to the College, Ferrum Elementary School was also locked down and secured.

Of the eight hundred students who used on-campus housing at that time, approximately half lived in Bassett Hall where the suspect was sighted. The dorm's 250 rooms were cleared through a room-to-room search. In all, approximately 300 law enforcement officers were involved in the incident. In addition to the outstanding response by law enforcement, Ferrum College also performed exceptionally in the crisis. The college had established its own emergency response protocol, from text messaging students to sounding a siren to initiating an immediate lockdown, and it performed exactly as designed.

While no arrests have yet been made, the exceptional response by the law enforcement community and school officials ensured the safety of the students and staff. That no one was hurt made the response an overwhelming success.

Public Safety Training Center Accredited

In September 2007, the Franklin County Training Center was accredited by the Virginia Department of EMS. Franklin County is the only county in Virginia to operate an accredited center. The Training Center will be used to instruct advanced life support programs that will provide the citizens of the community with the best trained care possible in a time of emergency. Seventeen students graduated from the first class held from September 2007 to June 2008. Due to the County's partnership with Virginia Western Community College, graduates of the program also earn college credit. The Franklin County Training Center is located in Rocky Mount.



QUICK FACT

Franklin County Fire and Rescue Agencies Responded to 5,508 Calls Last Year

TOTAL EMS CALLS:	4,260
AVERAGE REACTION TIME:	7.3 MINUTES
AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME:	14.5 MINUTES
TOTAL FIRE CALLS	1,248
AVERAGE REACTION TIME:	7.6 MINUTES
AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME:	14.7 MINUTES

EMS Calls:

2005 = 3,509

2007 = 4,260

21% increase in 3 years

Fire Calls:

2005 = 1,074

2007 = 1,248

16% increase in 3 years

Protecting Citizens

New Joint Public Safety Office Opens in Westlake

In May, Public Safety increased its presence in the Westlake area of the County by opening the Westlake Public Safety complex, a facility that houses Sheriff's Office and Public Safety personnel who are on duty twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The Board of Supervisors approved the joint location of law enforcement and emergency services personnel at the lake because the Westlake area is one of fastest growing communities in the County and an area where call volumes have steadily increased in recent years. This joint location allows the County to avoid the duplication of costs for two separate facilities and provides better service to citizens at Smith Mountain Lake.

The new Public Safety complex is housed in an existing facility in the Willard Office Plaza at Westlake. The space contains 3,444 square feet and has been split evenly between the Sheriff's Office and Public Safety. Law enforcement personnel housed in the complex include civil processors, an investigator, and an administrative assistant. Six fire/EMS personnel also work out of the facility. The space has a sleeping quarters, a day room, a training area, a break room, and a waiting area for the public.

Technology Investments Improve Public Safety

Franklin County Public Safety successfully pursued a grant in the amount of \$50,000 from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. This grant is being used to implement a reverse 911 system for Citizen's Alerting Services. This program will allow emergency managers to notify the public during major events by automatically calling residents' home and cellular telephones.

In addition, the County completed a project to link all fire and EMS facilities together to form a public safety communications network. This allows centralized storage of data and reporting using the Firehouse software. This project allows increased efficiency and lower costs for public safety operations.

Paramedics On Duty 24 Hours A Day

A new, full-time unit was added in 2008 that allows the Public Safety Department to provide Advanced Life Support coverage 24 hours per day. Six EMT/Paramedics were assigned to an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance to assist with fire/rescue calls. The unit operates primarily out of the Westlake area.

AEDs Placed at County Facilities

The Department of Public Safety received funding from the Board of Supervisors this past year to purchase twenty automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) for county buildings and facilities. An AED is a portable device used to restore normal heart rhythm to patients in cardiac arrest. Nearly all local citizens come to a County facility during the year, the placement of these life-saving devices is extremely important. It has been found that the use of the AED, in conjunction with CPR, within three to five minutes of collapse has resulted in a 40%-74% resuscitation rate for victims of cardiac arrest. In addition, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office was also issued six AEDs to be used by patrol deputies to respond to cardiac arrest victims prior to the arrival of an ambulance as they may be closer to the victim and can provide basic life support measures until the ambulance arrives.

County Joins Heart Alert Program

The County entered into a partnership with Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital (CRMH) to participate in the "Heart Alert" program. This program allows patients suffering from heart attacks to be fast tracked to the coronary catheterization lab at CRMH. This saves hours typically spent in Emergency Rooms where heart damage continues to occur. At least 50 patients have been treated thus far. Typical time from 911 call to restoration of blood flow to the heart is less than 70 minutes.

Grant Received for Spay/Neuter Program

The Franklin County Public Safety Department applied for and received a grant in the amount of \$10,000 from PetSmart Charities to implement a Spay/Neuter Assistance Program. This program provides \$50 vouchers to County residents that adopt animals from the Franklin County Animal Shelter to lower the cost of the spay/neuter procedure. These vouchers can be used at numerous local spay/neuter facilities to either pay for, or be applied toward, the cost of the operation. Reducing the number of unwanted animals lowers expenses at the local Animal Shelter as well as increases public safety by preventing increasing numbers of stray animals that can be vicious or carry rabies.

Protecting Citizens

OTHER 2007-2008 HIGHLIGHTS

New Fire and Rescue Vehicles Purchased

Franklin County purchased a number of new fire engines and ambulances over the past year to replace older, unreliable vehicles. Due to the number of miles and harsh conditions public safety vehicles must endure, they must be replaced on a relatively fixed periodic basis. These purchases are part of the County's annual capital replacement plan. New fire engines were purchased for the Snow Creek and Callaway Fire Departments at a cost of approximately \$325,000 each. In addition, five new Advanced Life Support ambulances were obtained and placed in service at Fork Mountain, Boones Mill, Glade Hill, Franklin County, and Red Valley Rescue Squads. Each ambulance cost in excess of \$125,000. This represents a total investment of approximately \$1.3 million in needed emergency services equipment.

Leadership Training Program Initiated

A new program to train community leaders of the future began this past year. The Public Safety Department oversees the new Leadership Development Course that educates community volunteer leaders, County personnel, and local business employees. The program offers courses in such important skills as management, organization, and communication. Twelve students successfully completed the initial program offering. Due to high demand, a second class has been started and will be completed in December.

Sheriff's Office Adds New Evidence Room

The Sheriff's Office has added an Evidence Room for the storage and maintenance of property and pieces of evidence that are recovered. The Evidence Room is in a secured location with limited access to help maintain chain of custody for judicial proceedings. The new addition was paid for almost entirely with funds from the seizure of assets in drug investigations.

Sheriff's Office Publishes More Specific Telephone Numbers

This year, the Sheriff's Office began publishing office telephone numbers to provide Franklin County citizens with direct access to areas that meet their specific needs. County residents contact the Sheriff's Office for a wide variety of reasons and this new policy allows the citizen to more quickly get in touch with the person or department that is needed. In addition to providing better customer service, this lessens the burden on the Communications Center for transferring calls and increases the efficiency of the entire Sheriff's Office.

Master K-9 Trainer Hired

The Franklin County Sheriff's Office has now become the K-9 training location for Virginia due to the hiring of Master Trainer John Hoover. His expertise is being utilized by many departments throughout Virginia and reduces costs to the Sheriff's Office by eliminating K-9 training-related travel. Hoover, one of only fifty-four master trainers in America, is accredited through the North American Police Work Dog Association and the Virginia Police Work Dog Association. It is expected that Franklin County will become the K-9 training hub of the Mid-Atlantic United States, training dog teams for agencies all over the East Coast. Additionally, having a master trainer on staff to train Franklin County's own animals will save money as the average cost of training is \$10,000 per team.

New Graphics Receive Award

The Franklin County Sheriff's Office recently won a first place award in a national competition for the new graphics scheme on patrol cars. In addition to the new look, the cars also sport new light bars that are designed to improve the safety of officers when on the scene of incidents.

Creating Jobs and Tax Base

Franklin County government continues to work hard to increase jobs and household income for local citizens. The past year has seen great successes, such as the opening of McAirlaid's; new priorities, such as the focus on regional tourism development; and planning for the future, such as investing in upgrades to the Commerce Park that will make the area more competitive in bringing new jobs to the community. The benefits are already being felt and many more are on the way. As the national economy remains uncertain, the County will strive to assist local businesses through these difficult times and to bring new firms into the area to increase job opportunities for Franklin County residents.

German Manufacturer McAirlaid's Opens

Governor Tim Kaine joined McAirlaid's GmbH & Company CEO Alex Maksimow in celebrating Phase I completion of McAirlaid's North American corporate headquarters and production facility at the Franklin County Commerce Park this past spring. Phase I development includes 50,000 square feet of production and shipping assets enabling the company to begin servicing its North American clients from Franklin County. Roughly sixty team members are now working at the new facility and the company anticipates ramping up to 160 full-time positions by 2012. McAirlaid's GmbH selected Franklin County as the site of its first non-European operational center in 2006. McAirlaid's selection of Franklin County was one of the ten largest foreign investment announcements in the nation for 2006. Prior to the opening of Phase I, McAirlaid's was operating out of a leased facility in Rocky Mount while the Franklin County Commerce Park facility was under construction. At build out, McAirlaid's is anticipated to bring over \$85 million in new industrial investment to Franklin County. Franklin County recently added significant upfits to the Commerce Park's water and sewer infrastructure to service McAirlaid's and other future business expansions in the park.



2007-2008 Area Unemployment Rates

Roanoke	2.5%
Botetourt	2.6%
Bedford	2.9%
Franklin	3.3%
Floyd	3.5%
Roanoke (city)	3.8%
Patrick	4.0%
Henry	5.5%
Pittsylvania	5.7%
Danville	7.3%
Martinsville	8.2%
Virginia	3.0%
U.S.	4.6%

In Tourism Development, Partnership Equals Success

The County of Franklin is fortunate to have a strong tourism industry and a wide variety of assets to attract visitors to the area. According to the Virginia Tourism Corporation's Annual Local Impact of Tourism Report, the local tourism industry is estimated at over \$80 million dollars annually and employs over 1,200 citizens with an annual payroll of nearly \$20 million. However, for many years numerous governments and organizations within the community have worked independently to attract new visitors and increase tourist dollars spent in the area. Recently, the County of Franklin, the Town of Rocky Mount, and the Smith Mountain Lake and Franklin County Chambers of Commerce came together to form a new marketing partnership that will pool marketing dollars to more effectively attract tourists to the area using existing marketing dollars. The total marketing pool for the 2008-2009 fiscal year will be \$92,865. This includes partner contributions as well as a \$20,000 grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation's Marketing Leverage Grant Program.

The tourism marketing pool of nearly \$100,000 will be used to upgrade the County's tourism website, better integrate all partner event calendars and information, and to place advertisements in numerous prestigious publications. In addition, the community will have its greatest ever presence in the Virginia Travel Guide, the main fulfillment piece sent to visitors requesting information about Virginia with an annual circulation of approximately one million. Finally, the fund will be used to create a brand new marketing brochure that incorporates all the partners and will be the main fulfillment piece for the County.

This new marketing partnership will be more than just the pooling of dollars. It will also be used to jointly create a unified marketing message and to better coordinate the three existing visitor centers in the county. By working together, all partners will reap the rewards through greater visibility and increased attendance at events. It is also hoped that this will be a first step towards better integration of tourism development efforts by all partners in the future.

Promoting Education

The Franklin County Board of Supervisors understands that no investment of tax dollars is more important to the future of the community than funds devoted to education. The County continues to invest heavily in, and see spectacular results from, the local public school system. In addition, the County placed additional emphasis this past year on post-secondary education and workforce training, believing these were keys to continued growth in the local economy.



The Franklin Center: Your One Stop for Higher Education and Workforce Training

The Franklin Center for Advanced Learning and Enterprise held its much anticipated grand opening on August 13th, 2007. Since then, the reception by local citizens and the business community has been overwhelming. This remarkable regional partnership, which now includes fifteen partners, is bringing new educational and employment resources to the community. Franklin County Public Schools Adult Education, Patrick Henry Community College, Virginia Western Community College, and Ferrum College provide higher education classes for citizens and customized workforce training for the business community that will enable them to remain competitive in this global economy. With state-of-the-art technology, both students and employers alike have local access to videoconferencing and distance-learning opportunities. The lecture hall seats 85 people with an executive conference room that will accommodate fourteen. Small business assistance is available through the West Piedmont Business Development Center that helps guide entrepreneurs through grant and business startup procedures. The Virginia Employment Commission is available on-site two days per week for job promotion, marketing, and unemployment insurance services. Community college enrollments have grown rapidly as attendance has already surpassed 2007 numbers by 9%. During the spring of 2008, sixty-eight citizens received their Associate's Degree through the offered programs. The center is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 am until 8:30 pm and 8:30-5:00 on Friday with staff available to assist with job searches, resumes, and referrals to educational partners to meet each individual need. Please visit the website at www.thefranklincenter.org for additional partner information and contact numbers.

County's First Branch Library Opens at Westlake

On July 8th, 2008, the doors opened to Franklin County's first branch library. Located in the Westlake Towne Center, the 6,700 square-foot facility offers the same services as the main library in Rocky Mount. Westlake patrons enjoy a variety of materials including books, magazines, newspapers, DVDs, books-on-CD, and audio cassettes. Fourteen public computers provide patrons with Internet access and common Microsoft programs. WiFi is available to those with their own laptops. A delivery service will even transport requested titles between the two library facilities.

The meeting room is truly a multi-purpose area. While serving as the site for the weekly Story Hour for 3 to 5 year olds and a Toddler Time for children 18 months to 3 years of age, the meeting room also provides a location for author readings, concerts, health lectures, and other programs of interest to adults. In addition, the meeting room is available free of charge for use by all cultural, civic, business, and educational groups in the community.

The Westlake Library was realized through a combined effort of the Franklin County Board of Supervisors, the Library Board of Trustees, the Westlake Library Capital Campaign Committee, and many interested citizens and volunteers. As an example of what the branch has already come to mean to the Westlake community, over 1,600 new card users have been enrolled since the branch opened.

Franklin County Public Schools Standards of Learning Test Results (2007)

(Number indicates percentage passing / N/A = Not Applicable)

Grade	English	Math	History	Science	Writing
3	88.06	96.69	96.95	94.08	N/A
4	89.79	88.53	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	86.23	93.89	87.12	89.12	92.10
6	83.60	76.84	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	84.19	68.76	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	85.77	92.03	88.03	90.54	92.32

Promoting Education

Ferrum College Sees Record Growth

For the third consecutive year, Ferrum College has welcomed a record number of students to campus. Nearly 650 new students joined the College's ranks, bringing total enrollment to over 1,300 students for the first time in nearly a quarter century. This year's entering class came from 18 states and 5 foreign countries. Since Ferrum College President Jennifer Braaten implemented the College's new marketing plan in 2004, applications at Ferrum have increased 89%, the number of new students has increased by 82%, and total enrollment has increased by 45%.

To accommodate the growth in enrollment, the College entered into an agreement in early 2007 with Mod-U-Kraf Homes of Rocky Mount to construct a new three-story residence hall on the west side of campus. Working in conjunction with several other local companies, Mod-U-Kraf Homes completed the brick-faced, white-columned structure in less than 6 months. The new building, known as Margaret M. Clark Hall, accommodates 120 students, two to a room, and is expected to meet ENERGY STAR certifications. It is named in memory of the late Margaret Clark, Ferrum's former registrar and longest serving staff member. This is actually the third consecutive year in which the College has opened a new residence hall to accommodate its growing student body.

For more information on Ferrum College, visit www.ferrum.edu

Windy Gap Elementary Construction Ahead of Schedule

On November 12, 2007, the Franklin County School Board approved a bid of \$12,024,000 from Avis Construction Company to build the new Windy Gap Elementary School. This award represented a savings of over \$1.5 million from the original bids submitted earlier in the year. The Franklin County Board of Supervisors subsequently approved a funding plan for the construction of the school that utilizes state school construction loans and various other state and local monies.



When completed, the school is expected to house approximately 350 students from the Boones Mill, Burnt Chimney, and Dudley School areas. The 30-acre school site is located on Truman Hill Road in the northeastern section of the County. Construction of the school began in late 2007 with a projected completion date of Summer 2009. The project has moved forward speedily and is now expected to be completed by April 2009.

School Contact Information

www.frco.k12.va.us

Public School Listings

Boones Mill Elementary
334-4000 (K-5)

Burnt Chimney Elementary
721-2936 (K-5)

Callaway Elementary
483-0364 (K-5)

Dudley Elementary
721-2621 (K-5)

Ferrum Elementary
365-7194 (K-5)

Glade Hill Elementary
576-3010 (K-5)

Henry Elementary
483-5676 (K-5)

Lee M. Waid School
483-5736 (K-5)

Rocky Mount Elementary
483-5040 (K-5)

Snow Creek Elementary
483-5599 (K-5)

Sontag Elementary
483-5667 (K-5)

Benjamin Franklin Middle
483-5105 (6-8)

The Gereau Center
483-5446 (8-9)

Franklin County High
483-0221 (9-12)

Private School Listings

Christian Heritage Academy
483-5855 (K-12) www.chaknights.org

Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy
719-1192 (K-7) www.smlacademy.com

QUICK FACT

• *Franklin County High School was recently named one of the best high schools in America by U.S. News and World Report*

• *All Franklin County Public Schools met the Annual Yearly Progress benchmarks and are fully accredited*

Expanding Parks & Recreation

While a vibrant economy is the cornerstone of a healthy community, it is the availability of recreational opportunities that determines its quality of life. Franklin County has committed itself to expanding recreational programs and parks as a major part of the government's activities. In 2008, a number of significant new offerings were brought online and the local citizenry took advantage with some of the highest participation rates on record. The Board of Supervisors understands that people need not only a satisfying, high-paying job, but also enjoyable outlets for filling the off-work hours.



Community Comes Together to Build A "Playground for All"



For many years, the joy of playgrounds for youth in Franklin County was experienced primarily by those with full physical and cognitive abilities. Thanks to an inspirational partnership between the Rotary Club of Rocky Mount, Franklin County Board of Supervisors, Franklin County Special Education Advisory Committee, Franklin County Public Schools, the Town of Rocky Mount, the students of Rocky Mount Elementary (who raised over \$2,000 for the project), the citizens of Franklin County, and many hundreds of hours of volunteer labor from Rotarians and area churches, this era ended with the opening of Franklin County's first fully accessible playground. The New *Rocky Mount Rotary Playground for All* has a value well in excess of \$75,000 and demonstrates what can happen when the community joins together to support our youth. An exceptional recreational resource, this play structure is unique in that it is fully accessible to all individuals, regardless of disability. The playground's sight, sound, and play access features bring the joy of healthy physical activity to children, regardless of disability. It is rare to find playgrounds with this level of accessibility in rural Virginia, thus making the project even more special. Rocky Mount Elementary is the educational center for youth with disabilities in the Franklin County elementary school system and the new facility will be used by the school during school hours. After school hours, the playground is open and available to all free of charge. This project marks the fifth park/playground project developed by the Rocky Mount Rotary Club in Franklin County. The total value of these five playground projects is well in excess of \$250,000.

Franklin County Summer Opens with a Brand New Beach

The summer season came to Franklin County and found a welcome addition to the region's list of places to go for outdoor fun. The Smith Mountain Lake Community Park Beach opened on May 23rd, just in time for the Memorial Day Weekend. The Smith Mountain Lake Community Park Beach is the second public swimming access point on the lake and the only one on the lake's entire southern shore. As ninety percent (90%) of all water-based recreation occurs in three feet of water or less, local officials knew that there was a crying need for additional swimming opportunities at Smith Mountain Lake. The new beach was created to fill this recreational gap.

In 1995, the Franklin County Board of Supervisors approved a plan to create an attractive recreational park at the lake to serve the area's growing population and to accommodate visitors from throughout the region. The first phase of this master plan for the park was completed in 2007 with the construction of the beautiful fishing pier at the property, the placement of playground equipment, the erection of a large picnic shelter, and the building of permanent restroom facilities. The new beach is the second phase of the project and represents substantial completion of the park.

The new Smith Mountain Lake Community Park Beach is approximately two hundred (200) feet long and over fifty (50) feet wide. Including the designated swimming area, there is over one full acre of beach and water for visitors to enjoy. In all, this white sand beach required over 750 loads of sand to complete and had a total cost of approximately \$260,000. The swimming area slopes to a maximum depth of five-and-a-half feet and is guarded by trained lifeguards during open hours. Typically, the beach is open from mid-June through the end of August from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM daily. Park users are asked to be courteous to the surrounding residential neighborhoods while using the beach facility.



Expanding Parks & Recreation



Pigg River Ramble Breaks All Records

Over 700 floaters descended upon the Pigg and Blackwater Rivers to enjoy the Pigg River Ramble Weekend in June. This was an all-time record and represented a 18% increase in participation over 2007. For the seventh consecutive year, Franklin County was proud to host what has quickly become one of the most anticipated annual water events in the Commonwealth. The Pigg River Ramble Weekend encompassed three days of varied and exciting kayaking / canoeing events, including the Blackwater Blackout, the Pigg River Ramble, and the Breakfast on the Blackwater. The 2009 Ramble Weekend will be held in May.

Philpott Lake Focus of Recreational Development

Over the past two years, the Army Corps of Engineers and local governments throughout the region have refocused efforts to develop additional recreational opportunities at Philpott Lake. State and local officials, as well as a vast number of citizen volunteers, have worked together to protect and enhance the lake area. This dedicated group was successful in keeping the Jamison Mill Park open despite Army Corps budget cuts that threatened to close this vital amenity. Plans are currently being made to not only keep the park open, but expand its offerings.

Another major accomplishment was the creation of a new organization to preserve and enhance the lake area. The Friends of Philpott is a non-profit group of concerned citizens dedicated to the betterment of Philpott Lake. The Friends of Philpott, along with the Franklin County Free Wheelers and Southern Mountain Bike Association, have been working to create a better walking/biking trail system around the lake. When completed, there will be over ten miles of new trails around the Jamison Mill Park area. Additionally, the Army Corps and the County have recently expanded the trail from Philpott Dam to Salthouse Branch Park, adding another five miles to the trail system. Currently, plans are underway to extend the trail from Salthouse to Jamison Mill. The long-term vision is to make Philpott Lake one of Virginia's premiere lake locations for varied recreation.

Floaters Come Out to Experience New Blueway System

Canoeing and kayaking enthusiasts can now enjoy the Franklin County Blueways System in exciting, new ways. The Parks and Recreation Department, in conjunction with the GIS Department, have created new products to enhance the visitor experience on the Blackwater and Pigg Rivers. A new set of Blueways maps have been created to provide users with detailed information on put-ins, takeouts, distances, and other useful data that makes their experience safer and more enjoyable. Additionally, the County has adopted a standard Blueways sign that will soon be erected along the river route and at all access points. The recently designated Blueways System functions very similarly to the walking trail system found in many other communities, with the exception that the user traverse the Blueways by boat rather than on foot. Floating, fishing, and relaxing are just some of the activities open to Blueways users.

Another major improvement to the system has been the construction of access points along the Pigg and Blackwater Rivers. Thanks in part to a grant from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Franklin County has erected put-in/takeout points that provide easy access to and from the water and include kiosks that offer information on the river section being used.

This type of activity continues to gain in popularity and the County plans to further expand the Blueways System in the future to accommodate demand.



QUICK FACT

Franklin County has forty-two (42) miles of designated Blueways on the Blackwater and Pigg Rivers. There are currently eight (8) access points situated throughout the community for easy enjoyment of this fun, free activity.

Expanding Parks & Recreation

Region's First Disc Golf Course Opens in Sontag

The region's first disc golf course opened at the Franklin County Recreation Park on March 29th to great fanfare. The eighteen-hole course has already played host to the statewide disc golf competition during the Commonwealth Games in July. This new recreational activity is quickly gaining in popularity and the Franklin County Recreation Department is proud to be at the forefront of this trend. The course has amateur, pro, and recreation tees for all ages and abilities to experience.

There is no fee to play the course and equipment is available for use by visiting the Recreation Department Office at the park.



Participation in Local Recreation Programs Continues to Grow

PROGRAM	2001-2002	2007-2008	% Change
Youth Athletics	3,980	4,761	+ 19.6%
Adult Athletics	448	468	+ 4.5%
Special Events	1,817	3,131	+ 72.3%
Classes	200	663	+331.5%
TOTALS	6,445	9,023	+ 40.0%

OTHER 2007-2008 HIGHLIGHTS

County Opens Two New Parks and Refurbishes Existing One

The Franklin County Parks and Recreation Department has worked to expand recreation to all parts of the community over the past year. Two new parks have opened recently, the Smith Mountain Lake Community Park and the Henry Community Park. In addition, a third park, the Snow Creek Community Park, is currently being refurbished.

The Smith Mountain Lake Community Park opened to the public in 2007 and was the first to open on the lake in thirty years. It is the first public waterfront park in Franklin County. The park started with a fishing pier, playground, and picnic shelter and has since expanded to include a public beach.

The Henry Community Park was made possible by a generous donation of land in the heart of the Henry community by the late Dr. Harry King. The land was subsequently cleared and the current park was established. At present, the park has picnic areas for use by the public and future improvement plans include a shelter, stage, and playground.

Snow Creek Community Park became an addition to the County Park System in 2008. Due to a lack of use, this once vibrant park, known for its exquisite baseball facilities, has fallen into disrepair. The County has begun the long process of revitalizing the park by repainting the existing building and added new fencing to the backstop. Future planned improvements included the addition of picnic tables, a shelter, and a playground to encourage more community events.

Waid Park Expands to Serve Growing Demand

Expansion and improvement continue at one of Franklin County's premier parks, the Waid Recreation Area. With the County's growing sports programs, officials realized that more facilities were needed to accommodate the increased usage. Recently, seven new athletic fields were opened at Waid and a parking lot expansion was constructed to accommodate 150 more vehicles during events. Planning is currently underway to create a new golf driving range at the park for use by avid golfers and to teach students from all walks of life about this enjoyable activity. All of these improvements will bring about another change: the park will soon be renamed the Waid Recreation Park and Sports Complex.

Supporting Families

The backbone of any community is the families that make it up. In today's world, it is understood that there are circumstances and events that happen that put some families in difficult situations. These households should know they are not alone. The County government continues to work to assist those in need through a variety of programs and new initiatives. The Department of Social Services, the Family Resource Center, and many other public and private organizations are dedicated to helping citizens through times of economic hardship, domestic abuse, health crises, and many other problems.

Family Resource Center Receives Full Accreditation

Franklin County believes that to secure the future of the community as an unparalleled place to live, it must protect those least able to defend themselves. For this reason, the Family Resource Center (FRC) was organized in 1983 by representatives from local human service agencies, local businesses, and concerned community citizens to develop and implement services for victims of domestic violence. In 1989, FRC became one of only two domestic violence programs in the state to operate under the auspices of a local government. In January of this year, FRC was notified that it had been awarded full accreditation as a domestic violence shelter for 2008. There are currently sixty (60) shelters in Virginia serving the domestic violence population first - homeless second. Of these, only seventeen (17) domestic violence shelters were fully accredited for 2008. This puts the local Center squarely in the top one-third of shelters in the Commonwealth. The rigorous accreditation process takes six months to complete. During the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the Family Resource Center answered 179 calls for shelter, ninety-four percent (94%) being from battered or homeless women. The children of the callers totaled 151, bringing the request for shelter from men, women, and children to 329.

In October 2007, the Family Resource Center hosted a Domestic Violence Training for more than 80 attendees representing various agencies within the County. The object of this session was to teach local officials how to spot the signs of domestic violence in order to better identify and help those in trouble.

Social Services Department Steps Up Efforts to Recruit Foster Families

The Franklin County Department of Social Services is currently seeking local foster homes in which to house displaced children. While the number of children in need of such homes has decreased over the past year, so too have the number of foster families willing and approved to take in these disadvantaged youths. In an effort to increase the number of local foster families, the Department of Social Services has decided to dedicate a full-time position to the recruitment of such homes. This was previously a part-time position. Ms. Michele Schetter has been tapped to take on the role of Foster Parent Recruiter/Coordinator after the first of the year. Anyone wishing to volunteer to be a foster family or that would like more information should contact Ms. Schetter at (540) 483-6865 or email her at mes067@piedmont.dss.state.va.us.

Foster homes are needed for youths of all ages, ranging from zero to twenty-one years old. Many of these children are placed in foster care because of abuse or neglect in their home situations and simply need a loving family to take them in. There are currently approximately ninety kids in the system. Foster families receive compensation to help offset the cost of caring for these children.

The Department of Social Services is also seeking trainers to assist foster families learn more about substance abuse, domestic violence, and budgeting among many other topics that help the family better understand and care for their foster child. If interested in becoming a trainer, please contact Ms. Schetter at the above number.

QUICK FACT

Working together, STEP, Inc., Southern Area Agency on Aging (SAAA), and Christ Community Church annually deliver over 13,000 nutritious meals to home bound persons.

CSA Growth Slowed

The Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) provides funding for services to at-risk and troubled youth and their families. Providing funds to protect our children and support our families is a worthy investment; however, the County must be vigilant in making sure each dollar spent is used to obtain the maximum possible benefit for those families being served. By shortening the lengths of stay for children in foster care, pushing for increased third party reimbursements, and the utilization of community-based services rather than out-of-home placement services, the Franklin County CSA Program has been able to serve more citizens with less money. This year the program's expenditures have been reduced by approximately 2% while the number of children served has actually increasing by 8%!

Providing Efficient Government

The Board of Supervisors understands that every dollar received in revenue represents the hard work, hopes, and dreams of a Franklin County citizen. For this reason, great care is given to being certain that every dollar expended provides the greatest possible benefit to the taxpayer. One way to maximize this benefit is to constantly strive to reduce the cost of government through increased efficiency. Over the past year, numerous initiatives have been enacted to provide greater levels of service at ever decreasing costs to you. This dedication to responsible financial stewardship enables local citizens to feel confident that their tax dollars are being used wisely for the services they demand.

Working to Reduce the Cost of Government

In these difficult economic times, Franklin County understands the situation its citizens may be in financially and continues to seek new ways to reduce the cost of local government. A good example of this commitment was a multi-million dollar savings on the recently constructed Franklin Center. The total construction cost of the Center was approximately \$5.5 million. However, the County was able to obtain various grants totaling approximately \$4 million that were used to reduce the project cost. This left a net amount to be financed by the local taxpayer of approximately \$2 million. Because the amount borrowed was so much less than it would have been without the grants, the interest savings alone amounted to over \$940,000 over the life of the borrowed funds.

Significant grants were also obtained in other departments of the County. Public Safety was successful in obtaining a \$430,000 grant for construction of a new burn building and training facility. Grant funds in the amount of \$180,000 were used to assist in road construction of the recently opened Smith Mountain Lake Park. The Virginia Tobacco Commission has provided \$421,000 for a new road and railroad line extension at the Franklin County/Rocky Mount Industrial Park to attract new businesses to the area.

Finally, the County is currently evaluating current year budgets for each department as well as analyzing the local and state revenue stream for the remainder of the fiscal year. After efficiencies are presented to the Board, then budgetary adjustments will be implemented throughout all County departments.

Internet Used to Increase Service to Citizens

Your local government continues to enhance the County's website and to add additional online services. This past year, the County worked with Virginia.gov, the Commonwealth's official site, to design a new look for the local website that includes "best practices" and features to support accessibility. The new design was deployed in August and provides citizens with a much easier to navigate interface. The search feature included in the new site allows a search of all documents and information contained in the County site. In addition, the County greatly enhanced its online job application to allow individuals to register once and apply for multiple jobs over time. The County's site also includes links to many other online government services. The County plans to launch a building and planning citizen access portal which will be the first online County application to accept credit card payments. There is already work underway to include additional solutions that will expand our online services. Franklin County continues to add new content and features to the newly enhanced website. By providing continuously updated information, citizens can visit the site to view the latest news and items of interest that will impact their daily lives. As a way to keep the public even better informed, citizens can sign up to receive news releases and updates through the County's e-news service. The goal of the website over time is to be the community's first stop for critical information needs and for data on all things Franklin County. To experience this for yourself and to sign up for the e-news service, please visit www.franklincountyva.org.

County Receives GFOA Awards

For the eighth consecutive time, Franklin County has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. The GFOA represents over 17,000 government finance professionals.

In addition, the County also received its fifth GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the local budget. Only six percent (6%) of member professionals received this accolade. The award reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. In order to receive the budget award, the budget presentation must satisfy nationally recognized guidelines and serve effectively as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide, and a communications device. The GFOA notes that recipients have pioneered efforts to improve the quality of budgeting and provided an excellent example for other governments throughout North America.

Providing Efficient Government

Board Adopts FY08-09 Budget

On April 29th, the Board of Supervisors approved the County's \$126 million 2008-2009 Budget. The Board worked diligently to put forward a tight budget that reflected only the County's most pressing needs and kept taxes low. As an additional show of good stewardship, the Board reduced its own scaled down budget by an additional \$587,000 to allow a one-cent reduction in the proposed real estate tax rate. Some highlights of the approved budget included:

- \$4.3 million increase in school funding
- \$1.5 million increase in funding for Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement
- Funds to open the Westlake Library
- Funds to open the Smith Mountain Lake Community Park Beach
- \$350,000 to cover increased utility costs for the Schools and County
- \$450,000 to cover increased vehicle fuel costs for the Schools and County.

EnerGov Implemented

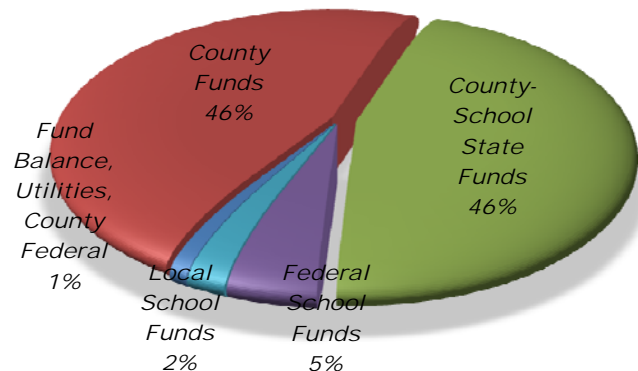
The County implemented a commercial land management software solution (EnerGov) to support the Building and Community Development departments in January 2008. This solution helps to better integrate the two departments and is viewed as a "best practice" in land management. The software provides greater support for the building and planning processes and provides support for the inspectors in the field. An internet access portal for citizens and an integrated voice response (IVR) system will be implemented in 2009. The new system, when fully implemented, will provide citizens and contractors much greater levels of service and access to information in real-time. Inspectors from both departments now have full access to permit and inspection data while in the field, thus allowing more thorough visits and reducing the number of trips necessary to complete the inspection process. Once an inspection is completed in the field, the status is updated in the system and automatic notification will go out to the citizen or contractor. Contractors will be presented with and trained on the new system in the coming months to maximize use of the program.

2008-2009 Regional Tax Rate Comparison

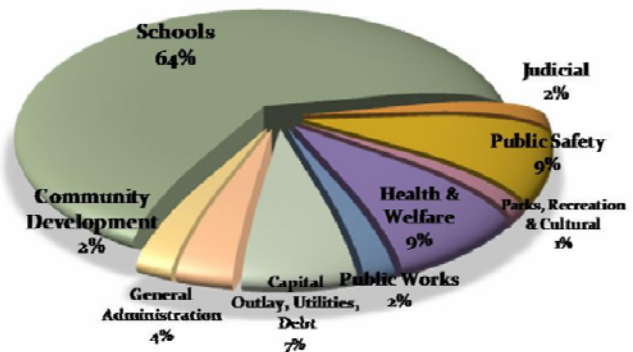
	Real Property	Personal Property
Roanoke City	\$1.19	\$3.45
Roanoke County	\$1.09	\$3.50
Montgomery County	\$0.71	\$2.45
Botetourt County	\$0.65	\$2.55
Pulaski County	\$0.62	\$2.14
Floyd County	\$0.60	\$2.70
Patrick County	\$0.55	\$1.71
Henry County	\$0.54	\$1.48
Pittsylvania County	\$0.53	\$2.33
Franklin County	\$0.46	\$1.89

*Rate per \$100 Value

County Revenue Sources



County Expenditures



Building Infrastructure

For any community to grow, it must invest in its infrastructure. Many times, spending on roads, water, sewer, and other utilities do not generate revenue by themselves. However, if done correctly, these investments pay for themselves many times over in the jobs and tax base they entice to the area. Additionally, such improvements add to the quality of life for average citizens and help to protect the area's environment. Franklin County has made significant investments in its infrastructure this year in an effort to increase economic development and expand services valued by residents. The Board is confident that the benefits from these projects will be realized for years to come.

Regional Water Line Expanded into Franklin County

In April 2007, the Franklin County Board of Supervisors entered into an agreement with Roanoke County and the Western Virginia Water Authority to construct a 12-inch water line along Virginia State Route 220. The extension is planned to be approximately 12.5 miles, running from inside Roanoke County to the Wirtz area of Franklin County. The total cost of the project is \$5.5 million, with Franklin County contributing \$3.2 million. The groundbreaking ceremony for the project was held on June 11th and the entire extension is scheduled for completion in 2010. To help fund the project, Franklin County applied for and received a State and Tribal Grant (STAG) from the federal government in the amount of \$1 million.

This waterline is expected to serve numerous homes in the northern section of the County. It is also projected to spur new economic development opportunities in the area that were not possible before due to the lack of public water service and provide a reliable, consistent source of water to the community for future water needs.

Commerce Center Infrastructure Improvements Completed

As an enticement for businesses to locate in Franklin County, the Board approved improvements to the Commerce Center located on U.S. Route 220, south of Rocky Mount. The water and sewer systems were upgraded within the business park over the past year to meet the expected requirements of new industrial tenants. This included digging a new well, building a water treatment plant, and improving the existing water storage tank. The new water plant is permitted by the Virginia Department of Health for 77,595 gallons per day and could be upgraded and expanded if needed. In addition, a sewage treatment plant was built with a 5,000 gallon per day capacity. The County is allowed to upgrade the plant to a 20,000 gallon per day capacity when needed. While these improvements were made in order to accommodate the new McAirlaid's plant that opened in the park this past year, the capacity of the new water and wastewater facilities far exceeds the company's anticipated usage, thus leaving room for future industrial development within the Commerce Center.

County Broadband Project Wins Governor's Technology Award

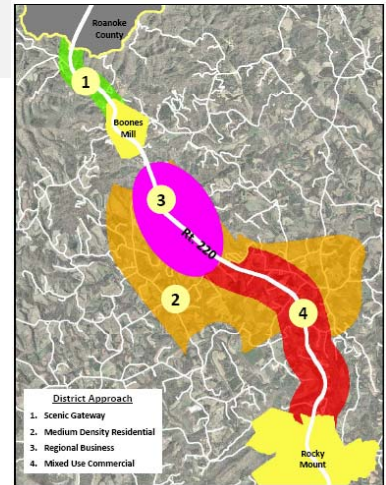
Franklin County's innovative approach to the use of technology in improving government services and efficiency has been recognized with one of the Commonwealth's highest honors. Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine awarded Franklin County the prestigious Technology Award for Excellence during the 10th annual Commonwealth of Virginia Innovative Technology Symposium (COVITS). Only eight projects in the entire state received this coveted prize. Franklin County's winning project utilized a public-private partnership between the County and B2X, a private sector wireless Internet service provider. The partnership built a redundant, wireless mesh network that expanded the County's wide-area network to all remote county offices including fifteen fire and rescue stations. This enabled the County to provide better emergency services response to the outlying areas of the community and to streamline government operations county-wide. In addition, the project brought high-speed internet options to citizens throughout the community, many for the first time. The project targeted those rural areas that were identified as most lacking in broadband availability. The availability of high-speed internet service is a prerequisite to many businesses looking to locate in the area and is viewed as a major quality of life issue for citizens. In receiving the award on behalf of Franklin County, Director of Information Technology Sandie Terry said, "This award demonstrates Franklin County's leadership in the state in addressing the challenges facing local governments with innovative solutions."

Planning for the Future

While constantly working to address the day-to-day issues that confront local government, the County must also look to the future. The Board of Supervisors periodically sets out its goals and vision in a long-range strategic plan. Due to the County's success in meeting so many of the Board's goals from the last strategic plan, a new planning and visioning effort is currently underway to continue the community's march forward. These plans allow County staff and the Board to focus on the desired outcomes and what must be accomplished to get there. Many planning milestones were met this year as the County continues to work to ensure the brightest possible future for the area.

County Drafting U.S. Route 220 North Corridor Plan

The County has begun the process of drafting a corridor plan for the U.S. Route 220 area from the Town of Rocky Mount to the Roanoke County line. The project was undertaken in conjunction with the extension of a regional public water line from Roanoke County into the Wirtz area along this major highway. The study is meant to help the community anticipate and manage growth along this corridor so that the County will better be able to meet the infrastructure needs of this growing area. The plan is currently in its draft form and can be viewed at www.franklincountyva.gov/planning-comm. The Corridor Plan, when adopted, will become a part of the County's overall Comprehensive Plan and help to shape policy related to this area for years to come. The process began in early 2008 with staff meetings to gather appropriate data and begin the brainstorming process. Neighborhood meetings and Planning Commission work sessions followed to gather and incorporate as many views and ideas as possible. The plan remains a work-in-process and all citizens are invited to view the documents created so far and to provide their input.



Drought Contingency Plan Adopted

In February, the Board of Supervisors approved a new Drought Contingency Plan to ensure the availability of drinking water to local water system customers during times of drought. Franklin County currently has three different entities providing water into the area: the Bedford Public Service Authority, the Town of Rocky Mount, and the Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA). The plan is activated based on the condition and severity of the drought and the guidelines adopted by each supplying entity. Bedford Public Service Authority issues its warning based on the level of Smith Mountain Lake, how much water is flowing in from the Roanoke River, and how much water AEP is using to create power. The Town of Rocky Mount makes its decision based on the flow of the Blackwater River. WVWA bases its decision on the levels at Carvin's Cove Reservoir. The County Administrator is authorized to follow the lead of the supplying entity and then issue one of three notices as deemed appropriate: Stage 1-Voluntary Conservation; Stage 2-Mandatory Restriction; or Stage 3-Emergency Restriction. This procedure protects local citizens' water in times of extreme drought and only applies to those using the public water system.

Conservation Lands Mapped

The Board of Supervisors has adopted a Purchase of Development Rights Ordinance for Franklin County. This new ordinance assists efforts to conserve agricultural, natural, water, historic, and scenic resources. The Board subsequently appointed the Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) to advise on conservation opportunities. Through an extensive process, the CAC, with extensive support from the County's GIS team, have completed the first mapping of the area's natural and agricultural resources. This mapping provides the County Board with a new way to identify natural and agricultural resources that deserve special attention and protection. This is especially helpful when reviewing proposed development projects.

New County Maps!!!

New Franklin County maps were printed in February of this year. The maps are created periodically to provide the most up-to-date information possible to those traveling in and around the County. The maps update additions and changes to road names and locations, as well as provide the latest points of interest and event schedules. The maps were created by the County GIS Department with the assistance of the West Piedmont Planning District. Anyone interested in obtaining a new map can purchase them for \$5 from the Franklin County Planning Department or the Chamber of Commerce.